

Allen is going to stay in charge of the Louisiana/Mississippi area. We've got another admiral who is now being stationed in Texas to coordinate the relief, response. We've got military assets that are being taken out of the New Orleans area, out of harm's way, and have come back in behind the storm, to follow up where it's needed.

I've been in touch with the Governor of Texas. I've been briefed on the planning for what we pray is not a devastating storm—but there's one coming. And I appreciate the mayor recognizing that, and he made a wise decision to say to people, "Be cautious about returning here because a flood—a rain of any amount could cause these levees to break again."

But progress is being made. As I said in Mississippi, I was pleased to see the progress being made on the ground. There's still a lot of work, but they're making progress. And they're making progress here in New Orleans too. Again, we've got a lot of work to do, but people are determined to get the job done.

Anyway, I want to thank you for having me. Thanks for having me back. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. at the Folgers Coffee plant. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Vice Adm. Thad W. Allen, USCG, U.S. Coast Guard Chief of Staff; Rear Adm. Larry L. Hereth, USCG, commander, Fifth Coast Guard District; and Gov. Rick Perry of Texas.

Statement on the Death of Simon Wiesenthal

September 20, 2005

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Simon Wiesenthal, a tireless and passionate advocate who devoted his life to tracking down Nazi killers and promoting freedom. Simon Wiesenthal lost 89 relatives in the Holocaust, yet he survived the death camps himself. He gathered intelligence to be used in war crimes trials and also passed on important information that led to the conviction of Adolf Eichmann. Throughout his long career, he relentlessly pursued those responsible for some of the most horrific

crimes against humanity the world has ever known. Simon Wiesenthal fought for justice, and history will always remember him.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

September 20, 2005

Dear _____:

Consistent with section 2(10) of the Senate's resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia of May 8, 2003 (Treaty Doc. 108-4), I am pleased to submit to the Congress the enclosed report prepared by my Administration.

This report is classified due to the nature of the information it contains regarding NATO's internal decision-making processes.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Richard G. Lugar, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; John W. Warner, chairman, and Carl Levin, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Thad Cochran, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Henry L. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; C.W. Jerry Lewis, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; and Duncan Hunter, chairman, and Ike Skelton, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 21.

Remarks at the Republican Jewish Coalition 20th Anniversary Luncheon

September 21, 2005

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thank

you. Thanks for the warm welcome. I'm honored to join you in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Republican Jewish Coalition. The RJC has been a powerful voice for the values of limited government, free enterprise, and a strong national defense. I want to thank you for your patriotism. I want to thank you to the devotion to our country. Because of your efforts, I really believe America is a stronger and better place.

I'm particularly pleased to be invited to help pay tribute to one of the founders of this organization, Max Fisher. He was a trusted adviser to many Presidents, starting with Ike. He has been a friend of my family's. I was honored to count him as a wise counselor. I'm honored to know his wife, Marjorie, who is with us today. Max Fisher was a man of generosity and accomplishment, a patriotic American, a friend of Israel, and a champion for peace. And he's going to be greatly missed.

As well, we mourn the passing of a great hero for freedom, Simon Wiesenthal. Simon Wiesenthal was a survivor and a witness, who served—who seared the horror of the Holocaust in the collective memory of the world. He's one of these leaders that refused to back down. He spoke with clarity. He insisted that we remember the lessons of the crime. He insisted that we remember that hatred prepares the way for violence, and the failure to expose and confront intolerance can lead to atrocities beyond imagining. As we saw in the recent desecration of the synagogues in Gaza, the ancient hatred of anti-Semitism still burns in the hearts of men. And the best way we can honor Simon Wiesenthal's memory is to expose and confront anti-Semitism wherever it is found. By condemning this hatred at home and abroad, we stand with the victims of the *Shoah* and declare to the world: Never again.

I want to thank my friend Sam Fox. I appreciate your friendship, you and Marilyn. I want to thank you for your leadership. I want to thank Matt Brooks. A smattering of applause out there for old Matty. *[Laughter]*

I see some of the members of my administration here. I thank you all for coming. Don't linger too long. Get back to work. *[Laughter]* I appreciate the Members of the United States Congress who are with us. I

see Senators and Congressmen—thank you all for coming.

I know we got—we've got some statehouse folks here. I think my friend Haley Barbour is here. He was looking for a meal—he told me that on the plane yesterday. *[Laughter]* Anyway, he's doing a fine job as the Governor of Mississippi. Governor Romney is here with us today. I appreciate him being here. Lieutenant Governor Michael Steele is with us—Michael—from Maryland. Thank you for coming. Lieutenant Governor Brian Dubie from Vermont is with us. Brian, thank you for being here.

How about your master of ceremonies? Good to see you, Ari. Thanks for coming. How's the kid? Huh? Good. Good man and a good friend, Ari Fleischer.

I want to thank my friend Lew Eisenberg for being one of the cochairmen of the luncheon—and Elliott Broidy. I appreciate you all taking this assignment on.

You're honoring good people today. Bernie Marcus—I appreciate the spirit of your corporation, Bernie—or your cooperation—your corporation during these tough times. It's remarkable. And I want to thank you for the outpouring of compassion you and your folks have shown. Shelly Adelson, congratulations, Shelly. It's good to see you. And of course, the man who is doing a fantastic job at the RNC, Ken Mehlman.

I appreciate the fact that the Israeli Ambassador to the United States is with us today. He's a good man—Danny Ayalon. Good to see you, Danny.

When I first came here, I looked around, I thought it might have been the ex-ambassadors club. *[Laughter]* Former Ambassadors Bernstein, Price, and Sembler are with us. Thank you all for serving our Nation, proud you're here.

We are a strong and resilient nation. I've seen that strength and I've seen that resiliency firsthand. One of the things that I hope you take comfort in knowing is that throughout our history, we've been challenged a lot, and every time we've been challenged, we have emerged a stronger and better nation. There is no challenge of man or nature that our citizens cannot overcome.

And we're facing some challenges these days. At this moment, our fellow citizens

along the gulf coast are recovering from one of the worst natural disasters in this country's history. Hurricane Katrina caused immense destruction. You cannot imagine what that countryside looks like down there. This storm swept away homes. It destroyed entire communities. It uprooted lives. And today, we've got another hurricane headed for Texas and Louisiana. I spoke to the Governor, Perry. I spoke to Governor Blanco yesterday about the preparations being made for this storm. Federal, State, and local governments are coordinating their efforts to get ready. Mandatory evacuations have been ordered for New Orleans and Galveston. I urge the citizens to listen carefully to the instructions provided by State and local authorities, and follow them. We hope and pray that Hurricane Rita will not be a devastating storm, but we got to be ready for the worst.

The scenes we witnessed in the past 3 weeks in Alabama and Mississippi and Louisiana have touched our hearts and have moved this Nation to action. I'm not talking about just government; I'm talking about the whole country. There has been an amazing outpouring of support all across America, and it's sent a clear message to the victims of Hurricane Katrina: This Nation cares about you. You're not alone.

I made a pledge to the people of Alabama and Mississippi and Louisiana that we're going to stay as long as it takes. We'll do our job to help you recover. People need to hear that loud and clear. And I outlined our strategy for reconstruction on the gulf coast. It rests on three commitments.

First, we're going to help meet the immediate needs of those whose lives were turned upside down. You got to understand thousands of people had to leave their homes and left all their possessions behind and went to shelters all throughout America. We have a duty to help them. So far we've mailed checks to 600,000—600,000 evacuee families to help them pay for food and clothing and other essentials. We helped them register for other aid that will be available because of laws on the books.

Second, we're going to help the citizens get their lives back together. We've got housing assistance going to evacuees. We understand they can't live forever in shelters.

We've got a strategy to help them go from shelter to apartment, or shelter to home. We've sent doctors and nurses to the region to help.

You know, an amazing thing that's happened is a lot of States have accepted the families—the kids of these families into their schools. What a fantastic gesture of compassion and decency. In our own State of Texas, school district after school district has said, "If you have a child that's school age, bring them to us. We'll help educate them." The Federal Government has an obligation to reimburse those school districts, and I'm going to work with Congress to make sure we fulfill that obligation.

And third, we're going to help ensure that the communities emerge stronger and better. The storm caused huge suffering, as I told you, but it's an opportunity to bring new life to neighborhoods that were suffering before the storm. So I've proposed some interesting ideas, and I want the United States Congress to listen carefully to these ideas.

First, I believe we ought to create Gulf Opportunity Zones up and down the devastated areas to provide tax incentives and tax breaks to get business and jobs back in that area as quickly as possible. If you want to grow something, you shouldn't tax it. If you want to encourage small-business growth, we ought to incent it to grow in that part of the world. Somebody said the other day, "Well, that's a tax break." That region is going to have zero income anyway. There's nothing there, in many parts of it. It makes sense to provide economic incentive, create economic incentives for jobs to exist. We want people heading back there for good, decent, good-paying jobs.

I've proposed Worker Recovery Accounts to help evacuees be prepared for the jobs that are going to exist in that part of the world. Listen, there's going to be a construction boom down there. We want people from that part of the world being prepared to take on those jobs. And so these Worker Recovery Accounts will help with job training.

I believe in urban homesteading. That says we're going to identify Federal property and provide lots for low-income citizens that they'll have for free, so long as they build a house on there with a mortgage or with

the help of a charitable group like Habitat for Humanity.

We've got a fantastic chance as we rebuild. See, when those streets are open, we want them to be lined with businesses, including businesses owned by minorities. When those houses are rebuilt, we want more owners and less renters. When reconstruction is complete, we ought to look back at Hurricane Katrina and say that this country grew not only in prosperity but in character as well.

There's a Federal role to play, and we'll play it. We'll do our duty. But there's also a State role and a local role. I believe as the vision of New Orleans emerges, it ought to be planned by people from New Orleans. And as the vision of that gulf coast of Mississippi emerges, it ought to be planned by the people in Mississippi. And we're going to help them. We'll help them make right choices. But we've got to remember that perhaps the greatest engine for change and growth will be the private sector. So as Congress thinks through its strategy, let's encourage the private sector to come in and help build those jobs and rebuild those lives.

We'll make sure your money is spent wisely. We're going to make sure we make tough choices and set priorities here in Washington, DC. And we're going to make sure that the money is spent honestly by sending a team of inspector generals down there to review all expenditures. That's what the people of this country expect, and that's exactly what we're going to do.

The American people have got a role to play in this effort. And since this storm, our Nation's armies of compassions have rallied and have come to the aid of people who are in desperate need of help. Our charities and houses of worship and idealistic men and women across this country have opened up their homes, their wallets, and their hearts. There's been an amazing, amazing outpouring of help. And the Jewish community of this country has been on the forefront of the efforts.

At Tulane University, the director of the Chabad, Rabbi Rivkin, brought teams of students to New Orleans and southern Mississippi and other communities hit by the storm. He called in folks to help. He didn't say, "Head away from the storm area." He

said, "Let's take it right to the middle of the storm area to help people." They helped rescue stranded people. They distributed bottled water and self-heating kosher meals. They cleaned up and helped salvage homes. They provided spiritual support for those who lost loved ones. And one of those rescued from New Orleans put it this way: In the days after Katrina hit, "Chabad saved lives."

Rabbi Stanton Zamek of the temple Beth Shalom Synagogue in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, helped an African American couple displaced by the storm track down their daughter in Maryland. When Rabbi Zamek called the daughter, he told her, "We have your parents." She screamed out, "Thank you, Jesus." [Laughter] He didn't have the heart to tell her, she was thanking the wrong rabbi. [Laughter]

Jewish organizations have thus far raised \$17 million to help the victims of Katrina. Our citizens are answering the call of the Prophet Isaiah: "If you give what you have to the hungry, and fill the needs of those who suffer, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your darkness will be like the brightest time of day." People are hearing that call all across the country. And there's more work to be done. I urge you to continue to pay attention to the folks down there by contributing to the Red Cross or the Salvation Army or the United Jewish Communities or B'nai B'rith International or the American Jewish Committee.

It's important. We got a lot of work to do. But when it's all said and done, people are going to realize that this country can respond to crises and help a neighbor in need. This country has got enormous heart and enormous compassion. After it's all said and done, because of the compassionate outpouring of our people, the country's heart, collective heart, is going to be stronger and better.

You know, something we—I've been thinking a lot about how America has responded, and it's clear to me that Americans value human life and value every person as important. And that stands in stark contrast, by the way, to the terrorists we have to deal with. You see, we look at the destruction caused by Katrina, and our hearts break. They're the kind of people who look at

Katrina and wish they had caused it. We're in a war against these people. It's a war on terror. These are evil men who target the suffering. They killed 3,000 people on September the 11th, 2001. And they've continued to kill. See, sometimes we forget about the evil deeds of these people. They've killed in Madrid and Istanbul and Baghdad and Bali and London and Sharm el-Sheikh and Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Around the world, they continue to kill.

They have a strategy. They want to achieve certain objectives. They want to break our will. They want the United States of America and other freedom-loving nations to retreat from the world. Why? Because they want safe haven. They want to topple government. Just think Taliban in Afghanistan. That's their vision. And we can't let them do that.

We have a solemn duty as a United States Government to protect the American people from harm. We have a solemn duty to remember there are generations coming behind us. We have a solemn duty to stay on the offense against these people, to defeat them in other lands so we don't have to face them here at home. And we have a solemn duty to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

Iraq is the central battlefield in the war on terror. It's not the only place we're fighting the terrorists, but it's the central front right now. You see, the terrorists want to turn that country into what Afghanistan was. Imagine a place like Iraq, where they've got safe haven to plot and train. That's what they want. That's why they're pouring in there. That's why they're going into the country. That's why they're trying to create instability. They got a powerful weapon—these car bombs that end up on our TV screens. They got the capacity to affect our conscience because we value every life. Every person matters to the United States—people of the United States of America. It doesn't matter whether it's a—living in Iraq or right here at home, we care, deeply. And they know that. And they're trying to get us out of there, is what they're trying to do, for a strategic objective. They want to be able to continue their war against freedom-loving people, with Iraq as a base.

We've got our own strategy. We've got a strategy for victory. Our troops—we've got incredibly brave troops—are hunting these people down and bringing them to justice. We're training the Iraqis so they can fight—take the fight to the enemy alongside of us. Our motto is this—it's important for you to understand—as Iraqis stand up, we stand down. That means as they become more and more capable, it's up to them to take the fight to the enemy, with our help. It's up to them to be on the frontlines of dealing with these people.

We're also going to defeat the enemy because they have no vision for the future that's positive. You can't be successful in convincing people to follow you if your vision is so dark and so dim as that of the terrorists. They have nothing to offer except violence.

We've got something to offer, and that's freedom. And freedom is powerful. I believe this. At the heart of my belief is, one, there's an Almighty; and two, that freedom is a gift from the Almighty God to each man and woman in this world. That's what I believe. Freedom is not exclusively American. Freedom is universal. And last January, the people of Iraq showed the universality of that freedom. Now, it seems like a decade ago, doesn't it, since those 8½ million people went to vote, but it wasn't all that long ago. And a lot of people around the world didn't believe that there was this great desire to be free. And yet, 8½ million people showed up to the polls. They said, "We want to be free. We want something other than the dark vision of these coldblooded killers, people who kill our children and kill police and kill aid workers and try to kill coalition forces."

And now the people have come together in difficult circumstances and written a constitution, and it's a good constitution. It's a constitution written with compromise, not with guns. It's a constitution where they're trying to overcome years of brutality because of a tyrant. And then the people are going to go to the polls again and vote for a government. No matter how many car bombs there are, these terrorists cannot stop the march of freedom in Iraq.

But that march of freedom is not contained to Iraq only. I don't know if you paid

attention to it the other day, this past weekend, but the Afghan people went to the polls again. They had a successful Presidential election. Now they voted for the parliament. It's amazing progress in a country that not all that long ago was a safe haven for Usama bin Laden and his plotters, that plotted the September the 11th attacks.

But freedom isn't—the march of freedom isn't contained in Afghanistan alone. We saw the march of freedom take place in Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and Georgia. These examples of freedom are inspiring others. Freedom is universal. People want to live in freedom, and the more the world becomes free, those who live in darkness will demand the light of freedom. And as freedom advances, we're laying the foundation of peace for our children and our grandchildren. *[Applause]* Thank you all. Thank you. Thank you.

This isn't easy work. I see the Members of Congress are still here, halfway through the speech. *[Laughter]* I want to remind you it's not easy, what we're doing, but it's necessary. It's the calling of our time. It's an opportunity to say, "We've done our duty." It's an opportunity to say, "We made this country safer, and we made the world better."

I got a partner in peace in Ariel Sharon. I've been impressed by his leadership. Sam mentioned the time when the RJC flew four Governors—and I happened to be one—to the Holy Land. And we went to a briefing by the Government of Israel then, and one of the Cabinet members was Ariel Sharon. And after the briefing, he introduced himself. He said, "Would you like to go on a helicopter ride and take a look at the West Bank?" I said, "Are you flying?" No—*[laughter]*—I said, "You bet."

It's interesting how history works, isn't it? In 1998, fall of 1998, the future President of the United States and the future Prime Minister of Israel were flying across the—across that country, with him describing to me how to keep Israel secure. A couple of lessons I took away from there is, one, you know, how tiny the country is. You know, a guy from Texas, we got a lot of space there. There's not a lot of space there. How vulnerable Israel can be. I also came away with the strong impression about how strong the

people there not only want to defend themselves, but how much they love democracy, that democracy is a critical part of their existence.

Ariel Sharon has shown great leadership, and he made a tough and courageous decision. He decided to withdraw from Gaza. I'll never forget when he came and told me that. My immediate reaction was, "This is a bold step for peace, Mr. Prime Minister, and I support you." He saw it, and I think I did, too, at the time, that such a decision would really force the world to recognize that only true peace will come when we defeat terrorism and establish democracy.

And so now there's an opportunity, and the opportunity rests with the Palestinian people to show that they can govern themselves in a peaceful way. The policy of this Government is to streamline the security forces so there's only one authority with security forces, and that's the authority that campaigned based upon a peace platform. The policy of this Government is to help entrepreneurship flourish, to help small businesses start. The Arab world needs to help right now. They need to step in and help the peaceful democratic forces within the Palestinian—within Gaza, to thwart those whose stated objective is the destruction of Israel.

The United States of America is firmly committed to defending the security and the well-being of our ally Israel. And we'll work with our friends in the region and throughout the world to achieve the peace that all want. My hope is that someday, there will be two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace.

These are historic times, and they're challenging, but I've got to tell you, I've got great hope, too, for the future. You know, in our response to terror and tragedy, we have seen how great suffering can awaken an even greater love, and we've been reminded there is no evil from which our Creator cannot draw forth greater good. You know, the attacks of September the 11th really causes us to be more determined than ever to defend our way of life. And it also gave us an opportunity to advance the cause of freedom that were previously unthinkable. And out of the horror of Katrina is going to come a rebirth

for parts of our country that will mean people down there will be able to live with greater hope and prosperity—the hope of prosperity—than ever before.

It's such an honor to be the President of a country that not only deals with our adversity but is able to create good out of the adversity we face. And the reason why we're able to is we've got a indomitable spirit, and we've got a land full of people that are incredibly generous and strong and compassionate. And I appreciate being in a room full of such people.

I want to thank you for your friendship. Thank you for the love of America. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 noon in the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Sam Fox, national chairman, and his wife, Marilyn, Matthew Brooks, executive director, and Lewis M. Eisenberg and Elliott Broidy, members of the board of directors, Republican Jewish Coalition; Gov. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; former White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer; event honorees Bernard Marcus, co-founder, The Home Depot, Inc., Sheldon G. Adelson, chairman of the board, Las Vegas Sands Corp., and Kenneth B. Mehlman, chair, Republican National Committee; former Ambassador to Denmark Stuart A. Bernstein; former Ambassador to Mauritius, Seychelles, and Comoros John Price; former Ambassador to Italy Melvin Sembler; Gov. Rick Perry of Texas; Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana; Rabbi Yochanan Rivkin, director, Tulane University Chabad Jewish Student Center; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama Bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Proclamation 7935—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2005

September 21, 2005

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The men and women of America's Armed Forces selflessly serve to protect our Nation, and they are among our greatest heroes. From the trenches of World War I to the beaches of Normandy, from Korea to Vietnam, from Afghanistan to Iraq, many coura-

geous members of our military have given their lives so that Americans could live in freedom and security. On Gold Star Mother's Day, we recognize and pray for the devoted and patriotic mothers of these men and women in uniform who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our liberty.

America's Gold Star Mothers carry a great burden of grief, yet they show a tremendous spirit of generosity in helping their fellow citizens. With kindness and understanding, they support members of our Armed Forces and their families, provide vital services to veterans, help to educate young people about good citizenship and our Nation's founding ideals, and bring comfort to many in need. We commend these proud women for their compassion, commitment, and patriotism, and our Nation will always honor them for their sacrifice and service.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 115 of June 23, 1936 (49 Stat. 1895 as amended), has designated the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Mother's Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in its observance. On this day, we express our deep gratitude to our Nation's Gold Star Mothers, and we ask God's blessings on them and on their families.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Sunday, September 25, 2005, as Gold Star Mother's Day. I call upon all Government officials to display the flag of the United States over Government buildings on this solemn day. I also encourage the American people to display the flag and hold appropriate ceremonies as a public expression of our Nation's sympathy and respect for our Gold Star Mothers.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:27 a.m., September 23, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 26.